



## Memorial Loop

Experience the Japanese cherry trees in their monumental setting while visiting some of our national icons. This 2.7 mile loop takes you through some of the park's memorials such as the Lincoln Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Korean War Veterans Memorial, as well as some of the lesser-known places such as Constitution Gardens where the 56 Signers of the Declaration of Independence Memorial is located. See how the landscaping of the memorials and Japanese cherry trees complement one another and inspire people from all over the world.

**1 World War II Memorial** - Dedicated in 2004, this complex memorial recalls the terrible sacrifices of our nation, while at the same time celebrating the accomplishments of the WWII generation. Indicating this double purpose, note the contrast between the still water in front of the wall of stars, and the dancing water in the central fountain. The columns represent the people of the nation who all contributed and sacrificed in this effort. The wall of stars honors those Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice in this conflict. Although Americans on the home front and those in uniform are both remembered here, the arrangement of the states pays special tribute to the veterans. The states are arranged in the order in which they entered the union, but the arrangement alternates back and forth across the wall of stars. Thus, the stars are further defined as having a special and central importance. More detailed information is available from the brochure at the contact station.

**restrooms**

**2 Tidal Basin** - Created in the 1890s with the development of East and West Potomac parks, the Tidal Basin is the ideal location to view both the memorials and the flowering cherry trees. Both are best appreciated next to reflective bodies of water, where the delicate blossoms compliment the grand architecture of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, Washington Monument, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial. From the top of the stairs leading into the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial you can appreciate the picturesque panorama of this majestic Washington Monument framed by the flowering cherry trees.

**3 Usuzumi Cherry Trees (*Prunus spachiana* f. *ascendens*)** - Planted in 1999, these noteworthy trees were a gift from the people of Neo Mura Village in central Japan. This generous expression of goodwill came with a desire to expand cultural exchanges between Japan and the United States. These trees with unusual flowers have a unique history. Legend has it that the 26th Emperor Keitai Tenno planted the "Usuzumi-No-Sakura" (meaning "cherry tree of gray blossoms") tree in Neo Mura Village 1500 years ago to commemorate the eighteen happy years he dwelled there. Japan declared this oldest living flowering cherry tree in the world a National Treasure in 1922. It is from the cuttings of this tree that the Usuzumi trees in the park were grown, giving them an interesting lineage. They can reach up to 40 feet in height with single flowers that change from pink to white and then gray. Look for the numbered sign to identify the trees.

**4 Fugenzo Cherry Trees (*Prunus serrulata* 'Fugenzo')** - Meaning Goddess on a White Elephant, the Fugenzo cherry is one of the oldest cultivated cherry trees in Japan. It is one of the first Japanese cherry trees to be grown in European gardens. They boast pink double flowers with curved petal tips that resemble an elephant's nose. The Fugenzo cherries have crimson buds with sharply toothed sepals that curl characteristically. These trees are among the last to bloom. Look for the numbered sign to identify the trees.

**5 Japanese Weeping Cherry Trees (*Prunus subhirtella* var. *pendula*)** - Blooming about a week before the ever-present Yoshinos, the weeping cherry trees are easy to spot with their graceful cascades of pink flowers. They can be 20 to 40 feet in height with a variety of flowers of differing forms and colors. One variety, the Autumn Flowering Cherry, blooms sporadically during warm periods in the fall, fully flowering the following spring. There are over 90 Weeping cherries and more than 20 Autumn Flowering cherry trees in Potomac Park. Look for the numbered sign to identify the trees.

**6 Akebono Cherry Trees (*Prunus x yedoensis* 'Akebono')** - This is a cultivated variety of the Yoshino cherry. Developed in San Jose, California in the early part of the 20th century, this is a pinker version of the Yoshino. How can there be an improvement to the pinkness of a white flower? Yoshino blossoms change color during their lifespan - pink buds open and fade to white petals, then turn pink again as they begin to wilt. The Akebono displays pinker colorations during these transitions. Because the sky may display pink in the morning, and again pink at sunset, this variety was named Akebono, which means "daybreak." Look for the numbered sign to identify the trees.

**7 John Ericsson Memorial** - Sculpted by J.E. Fraser, this seated figure of John Ericsson honors him as the inventor who perfected the use of the screw propeller and designer of the ironclad USS *Monitor*. This was carved from pink granite. It is the largest single block of granite outside of Egypt. Erected by the United States Government and private subscription by Americans of Scandinavian descent, the memorial was dedicated May 29, 1926.

**8 Korean War Veterans Memorial** - While the Korean War Veterans Memorial honors the men and women who risked and sacrificed their lives for this country, it also addresses the central theme of unity that pervades the entire park. The Korean War was the first major test of the United Nations. This memorial includes the names of the 22 countries that constituted the United Nations team that fought to repel the North Korean and Chinese Communist forces in this war. President Bill Clinton and President Kim Young Sam of South Korea, dedicated this memorial on July 27th, 1995, the 42nd anniversary of the armistice that ended the fighting in 1953. Stop by the kiosk for a brochure containing more information.

**9 Lincoln Memorial** - Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States, is known as "The Great Emancipator" and "Savior of the Union." It is here that people can reflect on the past and learn about this great man. Constructed between 1914 and 1922, the Lincoln Memorial tells the story of the president's two terms in office and his struggle to lead a country through Civil War by using symbolism, art and words from two of his famous speeches, which are etched into the memorial walls. In the center of the Parthenon-styled chamber sits a 19-foot tall statue of a war-torn Lincoln, exhibiting his compassion as well as his strength and determination. The geology of the memorial also acts as a symbol of Lincoln's relentless fight to preserve the Union by bringing together granite, marble and limestone from all over the United States. The Lincoln Memorial, designed by Henry Bacon, has remained one of the more popular places on the National Mall for expressions of freedom. See a Park Ranger and request a brochure for more information. **restrooms - refreshments - bookstore - souvenirs**

**10 Vietnam Veterans Memorial** - One of the more visited memorials in the park, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial honors those men and women who served in the Vietnam War from 1959 through 1975. People come from all over the world to view the black granite wall that holds over 58,000 names of those killed and missing in action. "The Wall that Heals," as it is often called, was dedicated on November 13, 1982, and serves as a place for remembrance, reflection, grieving and closure. Here, people are able to see and touch the names of loved ones, family and friends who never made it home. There are other components to the memorial as well. The Three Servicemen Statue depicts three young men in uniform looking towards the Wall in a display of strength and vulnerability. Next to them stands a flag with a base containing the emblems of the five services. The Vietnam Women's Memorial, dedicated in 1993 honors the women of the U.S. Armed Forces who took part in the war. Eight yellowwood trees surrounding the statue serve as a living tribute to the eight women killed in action while in Vietnam. In addition, the In Memory Plaque, dedicated in 2004, remembers and honors those who served in Vietnam and later died from causes related to the war. See a Park Ranger for assistance and obtain a brochure for more detailed information.

**11 Constitution Gardens / The 56 Signers of the Declaration of Independence Memorial** - This is a peaceful oasis in the midst of a bustling city and boasts many treasures for you to enjoy. You can sit and watch a variety of waterfowl such as Canada Geese or Great Blue Herons come and go from the lake. Dedicated in May of 1976, the 50-acre Constitution Gardens serves as an American Revolution Bicentennial tribute. As you make your way around the water, cross over to the island that pays tribute to the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence. Here you will find a fascinating memorial made up of a semicircle of granite blocks. Each block contains the signature of one of the 56 state representatives, carved to look identical to the pen and ink signatures on the bottom of the 1776 Declaration of Independence. The granite blocks are from the Cold Springs Quarry in Minnesota, which contains some of the oldest rock in the world.

**12 Lock Keeper's House** - Why is there a lock keeper's house so far from a canal? Constitution Avenue started out as Tiber Creek. The creek was converted into the Washington City Canal which opened in 1815, connecting Georgetown with the Anacostia River. However, the Potomac River already connected Georgetown and the Anacostia, and the Washington Canal proved a financial flop that served more as an open sewer than as a shipping canal. In 1871, parts of the canal were covered over or filled in. Used in the early 20th century as a watchman's office by the Army Corp of Engineers, this lock house would seem to be the only remaining remnant of the canal. However, Tiber creek does still flow, now through artificial conduits, beneath Constitution Avenue and out to the Potomac River.

**13 Yoshino Cherry Trees (*Prunus x yedoensis*)** - The Yoshino cherry is the predominant species in the park. During Peak Bloom, the Tidal Basin appears to be lined by fluffy clouds due to the profusion of the Yoshinos' single white blossoms. This variety can also be found in East Potomac Park and on the Washington Monument grounds. In all, there are well over 2500 Yoshino cherries. These trees, known as Somei-Yoshino in Japan, are hybrids of unknown origin that were first discovered in Tokyo in 1872. As a constant living reminder of Japanese-American friendship, the Yoshino cherry trees continue to amaze the thousands of people who make the pilgrimage each spring to see them. Look for the numbered sign to identify the trees.

**14 Washington Monument** - The Monument pays tribute to George Washington and his many achievements, including building and commanding the Continental Army and serving as the first president under our current constitutional system. With its monolithic simplicity, the Monument also provides an excellent artistic representation of unity. One of George Washington's accomplishments was bringing together what were essentially thirteen separate countries to form a single nation. Arguably, Washington was the only man so universally trusted and respected by the people that all the States would accept him as president. Thus, the Washington Monument honors the man as well as the unity of the American people. Brochures are available at the entrance and at Survey Lodge Ranger Station, located on the nument grounds along Independence Ave. Visiting the top of the Washington Monument requires tickets. A limited number of free, timed tickets are available at the Washington Monument Lodge on 15th Street, starting at 8:30am. One person can obtain up to 6 tickets.

## Tree list

**Yoshino** (*Prunus x yedoensis*) - single, white flowers  
**Akebono** (*Prunus x yedoensis* 'Akebono') - single, pale pink flowers  
**Afterglow** (*Prunus x yedoensis* 'Afterglow') - single, pink flowers  
**Kwanzan** (*Prunus serrulata* 'Kwanzan') - double, white flowers  
**Fugenzo** (*Prunus serrulata* 'Fugenzo') - double, rose pink flowers  
**Shirofugen** (*Prunus serrulata* 'Shirofugen') - double, white flowers  
**Weeping Japanese** (*Prunus subhirtella* var. *pendula*) - single or double\*, white to dark pink flowers  
**Autumn Flowering** (*Prunus subhirtella* var. *autumnalis*) - single or double\*, white to dark pink flowers  
**Takesimensis** (*Prunus takesimensis*) - single or double, white flowers  
**Sargent** (*Prunus sargentii*) - single, deep pink flowers  
**Okame** (*Prunus x okame*) - single or double, pink flowers  
**Usuzumi** (*Prunus spachiana* f. *ascendens*) - single, white-grey flowers - single or double, white to dark pink flowers

*single = 5 petals; Double = multiples of 5 petals*

## River Walk

This 4.1 mile loop is well worth the trip! It is also a great opportunity to see many different species of cherry trees unlike anywhere else in the park. Stroll among the blossoms while taking in spectacular views of the Potomac River, Anacostia River, and the Washington Channel. Please watch your step as the path may contain some uneven pavement.

**Okame Cherry Tree (*Prunus x okame*)** - Follow the arrow on the post to find the only Okame cherry tree in the park. Okame is another name for the Shinto Goddess of mirth and good fortune. Being one of the earliest of the flowering cherries to bloom, the Okame welcomes the spring with its carmine-pink petals, rose red buds and reddish flower stalks. Its multitude of single pink blooms makes for a brilliant scene in the morning sunrise. The reddish stamens persist for a week after flowering and the floral effect lasts for two to three weeks. Look at the numbered sign to identify the trees.

**Survivors of the Burn** - A little known fact about the Japanese cherry tree donation of 1912 is that it was not the first. In August of 1909, Tokyo officials donated two thousand cherry trees to their sister city of Washington, D.C. The trees arrived in the Nation's Capital in 1910 but upon inspection and to everyone's dismay, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) found the trees to be infested with crown gall, root gall, two kinds of scale, a potentially new species of borer and other possibly harmful insects. The trees were immediately burned as recommended. But did any of these trees survive? Look out onto the Golf Course at the gnarled grove of cherry trees. Recently, it has been speculated that these trees could be part of the original 1910 donation. First, they appear to be approximately as old as the 1912 shipment yet none of those trees were planted in this area. Second, the tops of the trees have been pruned in an unusual way that would be consistent with the USDA's attempt to salvage the 1910 trees before realizing the extent of the infestations. Third, the USDA used this area for research. Finally, there was a test planting of some of the 1910 trees and documents have revealed that not all of the 1910 trees were burned. Combining all of this evidence makes the case for this grove of cherry trees being the oldest in the park.

**Eastern Cottonwood Tree (*Populus deltoides*)** - This indigenous species is believed to be one of the few trees on Hains Point to have taken root naturally (volunteered); the other trees having been planted. Cottonwood trees are flood tolerant making them ideally suited for growth near the river. These fast growing trees are useful for timber production. Due to the wood's flexibility, it is used in the manufacture of snowboard cores. In late spring, female cottonwoods produce catkins which ripen and release many small seeds. Each seed is attached to a fluffy material resembling cotton, hence the tree's name. This cotton-like material allows the small seeds to be dispersed by the wind.

**Fort Lesley J. McNair** - George Washington established this fort, then called Washington Barracks, in 1791 for defense of the capital. Ironically, the British captured the fort during the War of 1812. President Abraham Lincoln test fired the first machine gun in history here in 1861. Four years later, the fort housed the first federal penitentiary where four co-conspirators connected with President Lincoln's assassination were tried and hanged. Major Walter Reed, camp surgeon 1881-1882, found the area's swampy composition useful for his research establishing the link between mosquitoes and the transmission of malaria. Renamed Fort Lesley J. McNair in 1948, it is still used for military housing. Educational programs for civilian and military personnel are offered at the National War College, the prominent building you see directly across the river from the trail marker. Some of the cherry trees Japan gifted to the United States were re-planted on the grounds of Fort McNair in 1922.

**Takesimensis Cherry Trees (*Prunus takesimensis*)** - This area floods frequently, making it too moist for many tree species to flourish, including the cherry trees. Takesimensis have been planted here because they are reported to be more moisture tolerant than other cherry species. Notice the prevalence of other moisture tolerant trees around Hains Point, such as River Birch and Cypress. Look for the numbered sign to identify the trees.

**Bald Cypress, aka Swamp Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*)** - Is a Bald Cypress tree an evergreen tree or deciduous tree? If you answered deciduous you are correct! Evergreen trees retain their leaves all year while deciduous trees shed their leaves annually, typically in the winter. Most people think all trees with needles are evergreens, but this is not the case. The Bald Cypress' yellow-green, feathery leaves are actually deciduous needles which turn reddish-brown before shedding in the fall, a rare characteristic for coniferous (cone bearing) trees. Conversely, broad-leaved Holly trees are evergreens, keeping their leaves through the winter. Indigenous to the southeastern United States, the Bald Cypress is flood tolerant and may live in excess of 1,000 years, reaching heights over 100 feet.

**Candy Cane Tree (*Prunus serrulata* 'Kwanzan')** - Called the "candy cane tree" for obvious reasons, we do not know why this tree has taken this particular shape, other than age, probable trauma, and random chance. However, the only living part of a tree's trunk is the thin layer of tissue just beneath the bark. The interior of a tree trunk consists of the now dead remnants of previous years' growth; hence, the age of a tree can be determined by counting the rings. As compromised as this tree appears, it may yet live for many years because there is a continuous strip of outer material from roots to branches.

**Kwanzan Cherry Trees (*Prunus serrulata* 'Kwanzan')** - Named after a mountain in Japan, the Kwanzan cherries are admired for their heavy hanging clusters of clear pink double blossoms. There are 481 Kwanzan trees in the park, second to the predominant Yoshinos. These are easier to identify because they bloom two weeks after the Yoshinos and they are taller with a dark reddish-brown bark. Not only are they the showiest of the bunch but unlike the other trees, their leaves begin to grow while the tree is still in bloom. Look at the numbered post to identify the Kwanzan Cherry tree. Look for the numbered sign to identify the trees.

**Japanese Weeping Cherry Trees (*Prunus subhirtella* var. *Pendula*)** - Blooming about a week before the ever-present Yoshinos, the weeping cherry trees are easy to spot with their graceful cascades of pink flowers. They can be 20 to 40 feet in height with a variety of flowers of differing forms and colors. One variety, the Autumn Flowering Cherry, blooms sporadically during warm periods in the fall, fully flowering the following spring. There are over 90 Weeping cherries and more than 20 Autumn Flowering cherry trees in Potomac Park. Look for the numbered sign to identify the trees.

**Red Buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*)** - This tree, indigenous to the southeastern United States, grows ten to twenty feet in height and produces groupings of vibrant red flowers during the spring. Pollinators, including hummingbirds, are attracted to the flowers and may be seen feeding during bloom. However, the rest of the plant, including the seeds and leaves, tend not to be eaten by wildlife because they are highly toxic. Native Americans took advantage of Red Buckeye trees by placing their seeds and mashed branches in water to sedate fish thereby creating easier catches. These Buckeyes were planted here because the street had already been named Buckeye Drive.

**Cuban Friendship Urn** - Also called the Maine Memorial. This stone originally stood in Havana, Cuba as a memorial to the 266 crewmen who died in 1898 when the USS *Maine* exploded and sank in that city's harbor. The disaster sparked the Spanish-American War, during which the U.S. liberated Cuba from Spain. In appreciation of American assistance, the Cuban government erected a memorial, which was toppled by a hurricane in 1926. This urn was carved from a fragment of that memorial, re-dubbed the Cuban Friendship Urn, and sent to reside in front of the Cuban embassy in Washington, D.C. When the relationship between the two nations deteriorated, the urn was removed to a warehouse where it languished for several decades. Recently "discovered" and placed in the park, almost under a bridge, it has earned the description "most obscure memorial."

**Sargent Cherry Trees (*Prunus sargentii*)** - Also called Yama-zakura (mountain cherry), this species is one of the most cold-resistant of the native Asian cherry trees. Perhaps because this area is not as cold as its mountain home, this species often does not bloom in this area until the tree is over 10 years old. The flowers often vary in color size and petal shape. Look for the numbered sign to identify the trees.

**Saucer Magnolia (*Magnolia x soulangeana*)** - As the 'x' in the scientific name indicates this tree is a hybrid cross between two species (see - What's in a Name). It was developed in 1820 by Etienne Soulange-Bodin (1774-1846), a retired cavalry officer in Napoleon's army, by crossing *Magnolia denudata* with *M. liliflora*. Plant breeders have continued to develop this hybrid in many countries with over one hundred named varieties now known. Magnolias are among the oldest flowering plants, dating back approximately 100 million years. These trees developed flowers prior to the appearance of bees and depended on beetles for pollination. Thus, magnolias have very tough flowers capable of supporting heavy bodied beetles landing and walking on them.

**George Mason Memorial** - Dedicated in 2002, the modest size of this memorial belies the enormity of George Mason's influence on both national and international political thought. As the author of the Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776), Mason created the first constitutional protection of individual rights. The Declaration of Independence, United States Bill of Rights, France's Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, and the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Rights all drew inspiration from Mason's writings. Notice the similarity between Mason's words, quoted here, and Jefferson's words from the Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."



The Greater Washington National Parks Fund strengthens connections among Washington-area residents and visitors and the hundreds of National Park Service sites in the region by raising awareness, supporting programs and services, and inspiring the protection of these special places. [www.gwnpf.org](http://www.gwnpf.org)